

Thomas Jefferson to Archibald H. Rowan, September 26, 1798, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO ARCHIBALD HAMILTON ROWAN J. MSS.

Monticello, Sep. 26, 98.

Sir, —To avoid the suspicions & curiosity of the post office, which would have been excited by seeing your name and mine on the back of a letter, I have delayed acknowledging the receipt of your favor of July last, till an occasion to write to an inhabitant of Wilmington gives me an opportunity of putting my letter under cover to him. The system of alarm & jealousy which has been so powerfully played off in England, has been mimicked here, not entirely without success. The most long-sighted politician could not, seven years ago, have imagined that the people of this wide-extended country could have been enveloped in such delusion, and made so much afraid of themselves and their own power, as to surrender it spontaneously to those who are manœuvring them into a form of government, the principal branches of which may be beyond their control. The commerce of England, however, has spread its roots over the whole face of our country. This is a real source of all the obliquities of the public mind; and I should have had doubts of the ultimate term they might attain; but happily, the game, to be worth the playing of those engaged in it, must flush them with money. The authorized expenses of this year are beyond those of any year in the late war for independence, & they are of a nature to beget great & constant expenses. The purse of the people is the real seat of sensibility. It is to be drawn upon largely, and they will then listen to truths which could not excite them through any other organ. In this State, however, the delusion has not prevailed. They are sufficiently on their

Library of Congress

guard to have justified the assurance, that should you cruse it for your asylum, the laws of the land, administered by upright judges, would protect you from any exercise of power unauthorized by the Constitution of the United States. The Habeas

corpus secures every man here, alien or citizen, against everything which is not law, whatever shape it may assume. Should this, or any other circumstance, draw your footsteps this way, I shall be happy to be among those who may have an opportunity of testifying, by every attention in our power, the sentiments of esteem & respect which the circumstances of your history have inspired, and which are peculiarly felt by, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.